



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

February 3, 2006

# News Release

## **MEXICAN ALIEN SMUGGLERS RECEIVE 57-MONTH SENTENCE**

*“Coyotes” linked to death of 23-year-old Honduran alien who fell off a train*

MIDLAND, Texas — A federal judge here Wednesday sentenced two men from Mexico to 57 months in prison for conspiracy to smuggle and transport illegal aliens which resulted in the death of a 23-year-old Honduran man. This case was investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Jose Luis Landa-Perez, 33, and Mariano Valdez-Muñoz, 25, both illegal aliens from Torreon, Mexico, were sentenced to almost five years in prison by U.S. District Judge Robert Junell. The men were also sentenced to three years of supervised release after they complete their prison sentences.

Hector Abel Duarte was killed when alien smugglers Landa-Perez and Valdez-Muñoz tried to load Duarte into a “sea pack” container on a moving freight train Aug. 30. During the attempt, Duarte fell and was run over by the train.

Union Pacific employees in Hudspeth County found Duarte’s badly damaged body next to its tracks near Fort Hancock, Texas. ICE special agents, working closely with Union Pacific employees, determined that the train that had last passed through the area was headed to Midland, Texas. Special agents stopped the train and discovered 10 aliens on board. They also found blood on the undercarriage of the train car.

The ICE investigation revealed Duarte had illegally crossed the border into the United States the previous day. The aliens on the train told ICE special agents that Duarte died after falling from the train. They also identified Landa-Perez and Valdez-Muñoz, two of the aliens on the train, as the “coyotes,” or smuggling ringleaders. The aliens said they each paid between \$1,500 and \$1,900 to be smuggled into the United States and ultimately to Dallas, Texas.

After they serve their prison sentences, Landa-Perez and Valdez-Muñoz will be processed for deportation to Mexico.

The Hudspeth County Sheriff's Office, Midland Police Department, Midland County Sheriff's Office, and the Union Pacific Railroad police assisted in the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney John Klassen prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*